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## INTRODUCTION

The population of physical therapists nationally does not reflect the diversity of the population of the US. In our rural Commonwealth, the same is true. Research tells us that patients respond well to providers they can identify with, and that students similarly respond well to mentors who have had shared life experiences. Research in other health professions has shown that investing in mentorship initiatives builds a network for future students. This project was designed to provide a framework for physical therapy (PT) students to learn about mentoring, being mentored, and develop a larger mentor network for future and aspirational PT students.

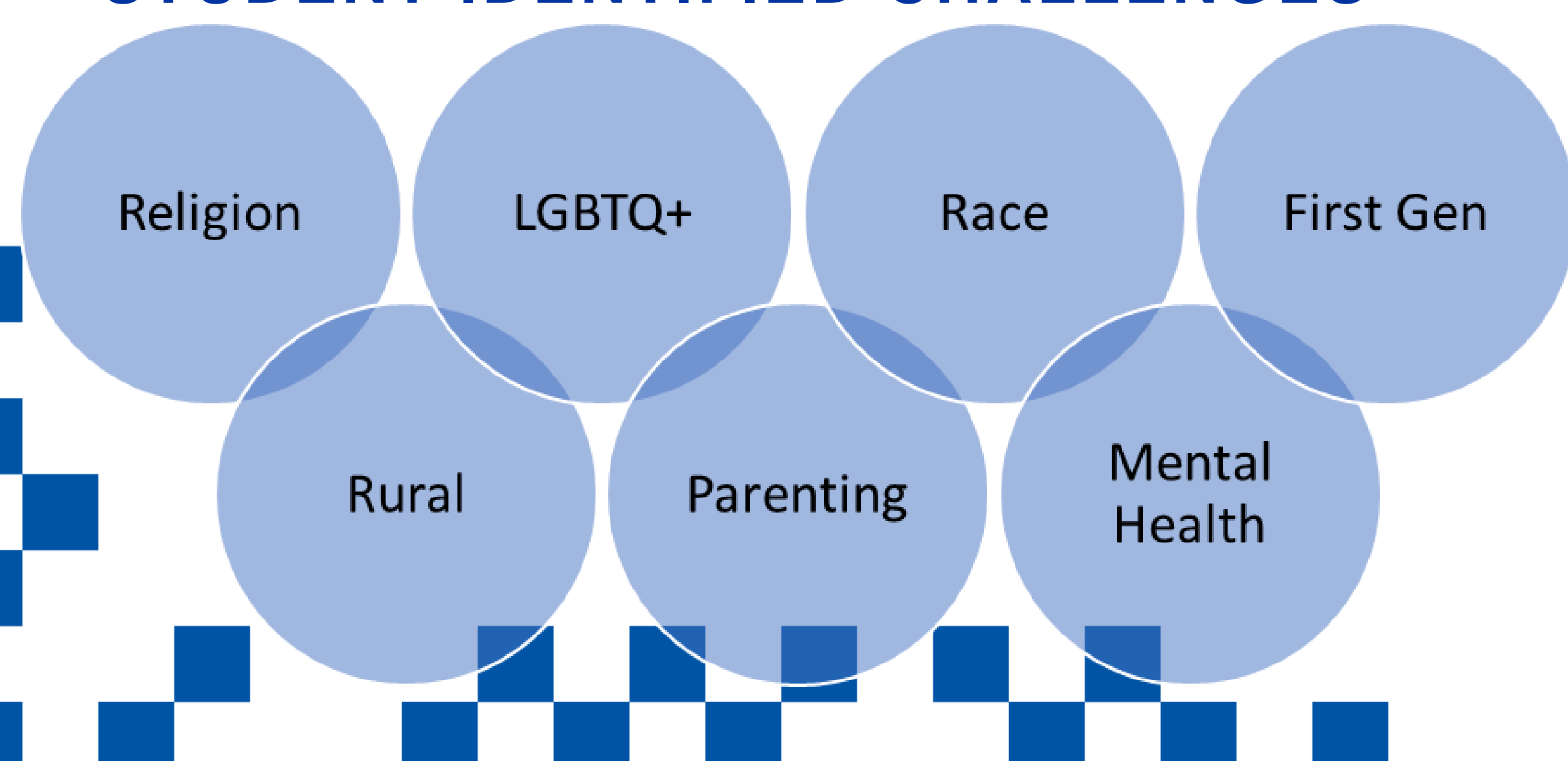
## PURPOSE OF STUDY

Physical Therapy (PT) students with self-identified diverse aspects often have gaps in the support they receive along their educational experiences and into their early careers. Social determinants of learning can be positively impacted with mentoring. Providing education in more meaningful social and community-based context enhances the built neighborhood of people for our diverse Kentuckians to participate in physical therapy and be able to live their best lives.

## METHODS

- Mixed method process
- Pre- and post- course questionnaires
- Likert scales and open-ended questions
- Current mentorship status, mentorship readiness, mentee readiness captured
- 10 second and third year UKDPT students
- Specific mentors for each student

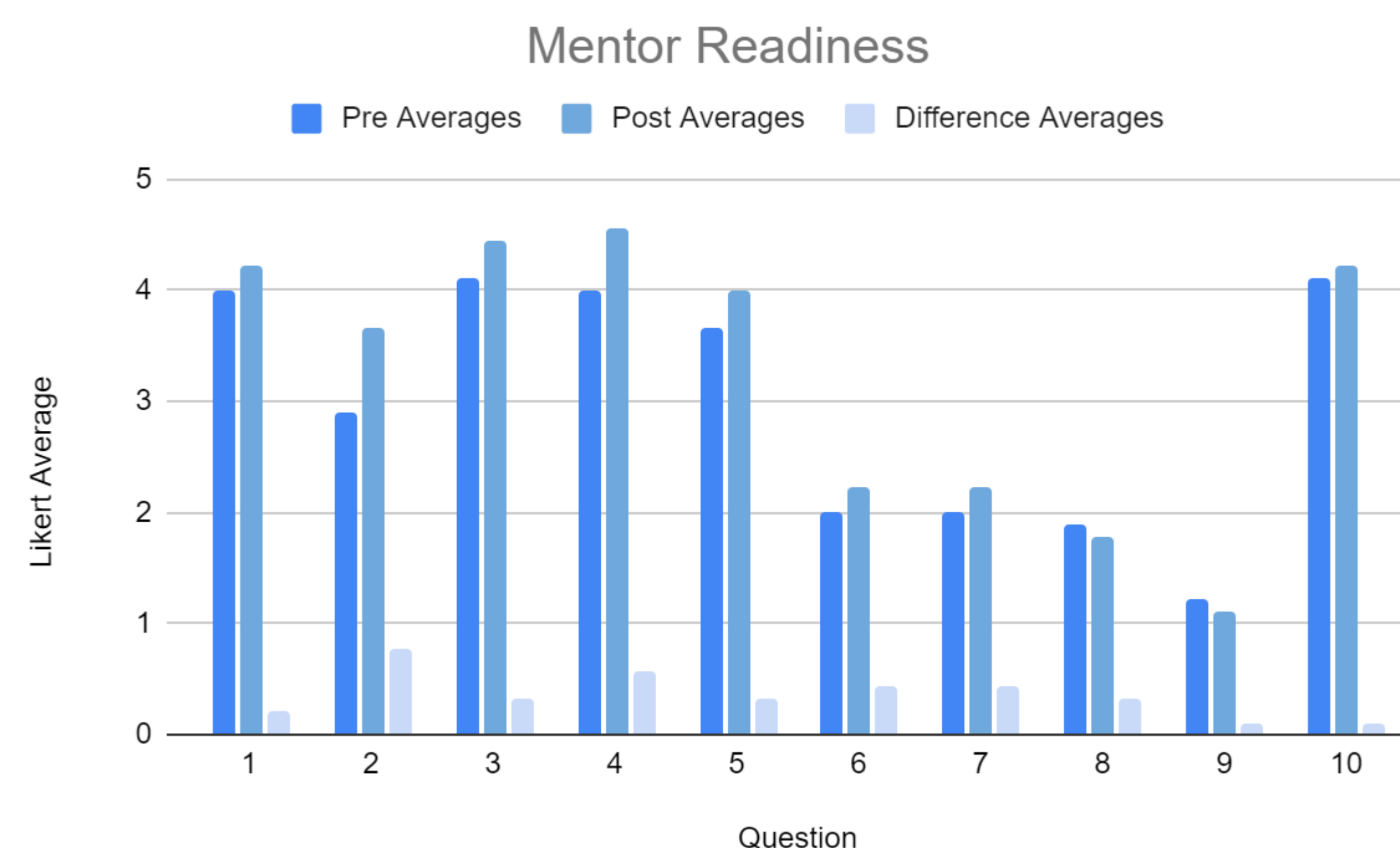
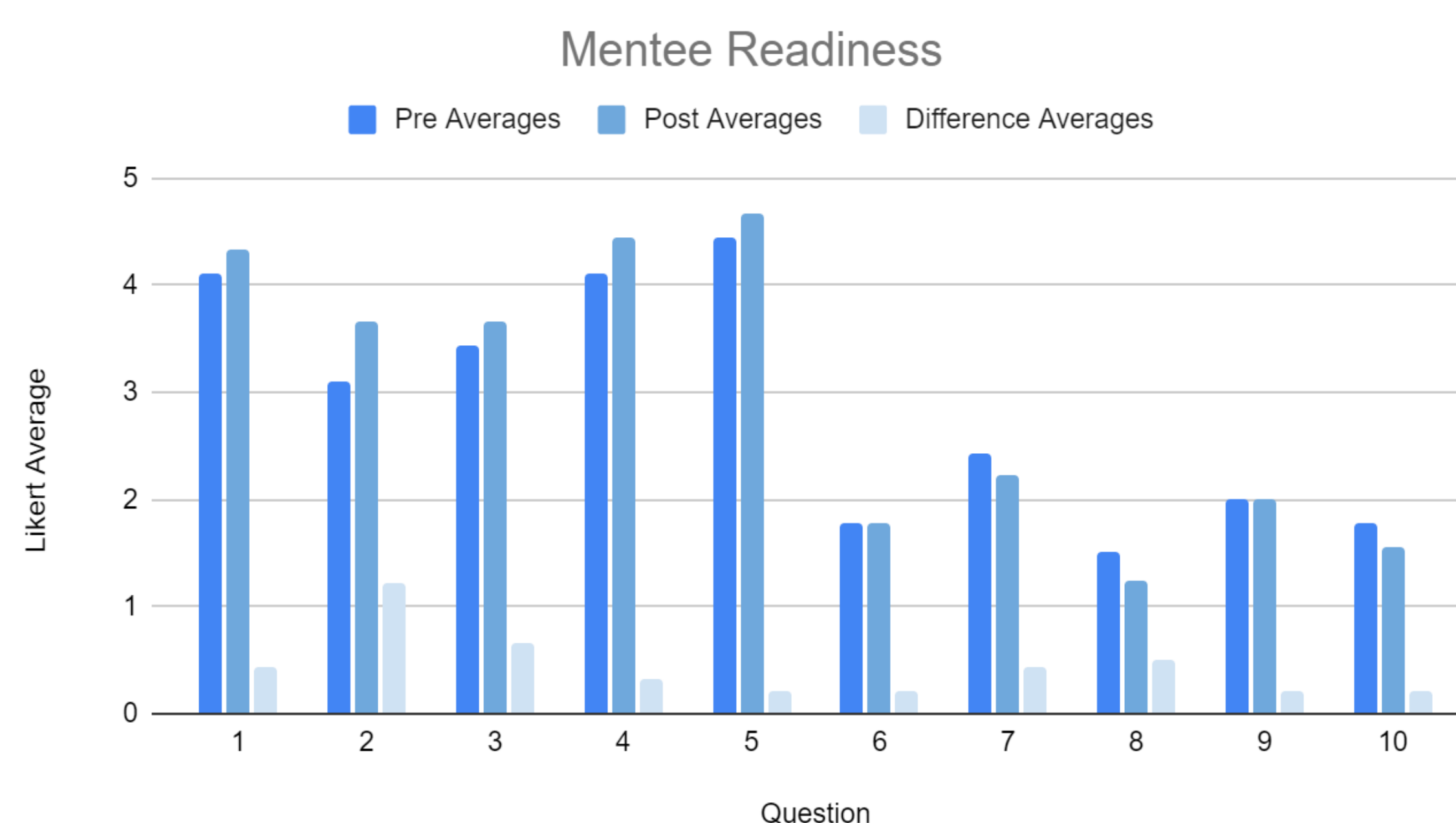
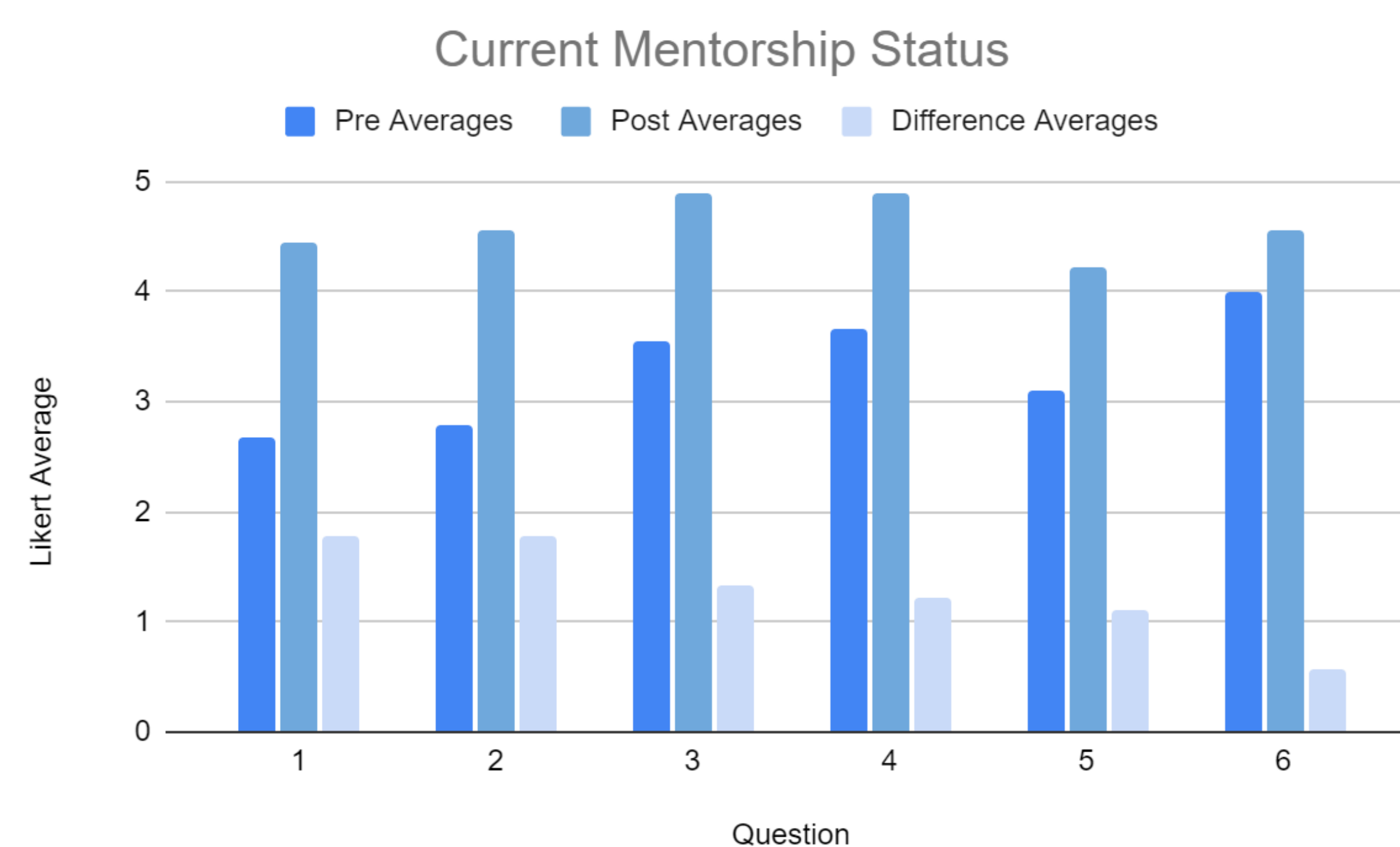
## STUDENT IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES



## CURRICULAR ELEMENTS



## RESULTS



## STUDENT QUOTES

*I know what it is like to be the odd man out. ... I am looking for people who share this experience, so that we may navigate through them together and share in the wisdom we have ....*

*...Guidance for interacting with patients from a variety of backgrounds. ... to learn more about how faith impacts professional practice. Also... seeking guidance for ... a career in pediatric PT.*

*I would like to see more black women represented in the PT field and have more of a connection with them.*

*I am a very anxious person and have created a toolbox of tips/tricks for managing the symptoms. I would like to pass these along to other individuals suffering with anxiety.*

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Quantitative questionnaire results indicate at least modest gains in specific aspects of mentoring, as well as readiness to mentor and be mentored. Qualitative results indicated that students felt more comfortable being vulnerable sharing information, had bigger networks than they had anticipated, and found value in mentorship from others they may not have sought a relationship with prior to this course.

A year later, 50% of this cohort participated in the course as a mentor.

## DISCUSSION

This pilot course was built on disparate aspects of best practice, but no exact template was available to duplicate. The modest amount of information gleaned from participants indicates that this course is impactful. Moving forward, it will be informative to collect more specific pre/post impressions to guide the curriculum and follow up with prior participants to follow their mentor/mentee paths.

## CONCLUSION

This project demonstrated that intentionally addressing mentorship can have a positive impact on PT students who identify aspects of diversity that have not been addressed with prior experiences. This mentorship elective design can be recreated at a variety of institutions. Work to develop a network of mentors will aid our profession to continue to build a more inclusive workforce.

## IMPORTANCE TO MEMBERSHIP

A workforce that reflects the community has the potential to enrich all stakeholders. Academic institutions and PT clinical settings can help bridge the mentoring gaps that PT students, early-career clinicians, and even PT-interested students have with preparation and intentional networking.

## REFERENCES

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